

BEN BARKA TRIAL ENDS TESTIMONY

Fugitive Is Linked to Club
Near Kidnapping Scene

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PARIS, Oct. 10 Behind a door with a peephole on the Street of the Holy Fathers is the Club des Vieux de la Vieille, which may be roughly translated as the Old-Timers' Club.

One of its officers explained at the Ben Barka trial that it was just a sort of canteen for nostalgic policemen, intelligence agents and civilians whose only common tie was that they served the Resistance during the war.

How did it happen then, he was asked, that among those lunching at the old underground fighters' hangout was an old thug-informer for the Gestapo named Georges (Jo) Boucheseiche?

The clubman shrugged and said he must have been the guest of a member.

Boucheseiche fled to Morocco a few days after Mehdi Ben Barka, the Moroccan opposition leader, was kidnapped last Oct. 29 from the teeming Boulevard Saint Germain, just a short walk from the club.

Boucheseiche's presence there was only one of several incidents involving the club in the affair.

No More Testimony

A ruling by the court today ended the hearing of witnesses, and all that remains now is the summing up by counsel, which may take two weeks.

It is generally agreed that the five weeks of testimony have shed little new light on the fate of the missing opposition leader. But a lurid light was shed on the curious relationship between the police and intelligence services, on the one hand, and the underworld on the other—a relationship that may help explain a hesitation by the authorities that permitted most of the kidnappers to get away.

Boucheseiche, for example, was not only a friend of policemen but also a valued informant. His chief contact with the French intelligence was through his friend Antoine Lopez, whose cover job was that of an official at Orly Airport.

Lopez did not limit his services to the French Government,

nor to the Moroccans. It may be said on excellent authority that he also was a useful informant for the United States Bureau of Narcotics.

Informed on Smugglers

Lopez was able to examine outbound baggage at Orly and inform the Americans about drug smugglers. It is presumed that he collected substantial rewards.

When Lopez organized the fake arrest of Mr. Ben Barka, he enlisted two Paris detectives from the narcotics squad.

The Boucheseiche gang is widely believed here to have performed tasks for the French Government that the authorities could not perform themselves. These began during the final stage of the Algerian war, when the police could not alone be depended upon to cope with right-wing terrorists.

Boucheseiche also is credited with the kidnapping in Munich two years ago of a terrorist leader, Col. Antoine Argoud, who was "found" trussed in a truck beside the Prefecture of Police here.

Those familiar with the underworld scene here doubt that the prosperous Boucheseiche performed these services for money. They suggest instead that he was allowed to pursue his main enterprise—prostitution—unmolested.

Student Gave Alarm

The Ben Barka operation seems to have gone wrong largely because the detectives, thinking it was a routine job, seized Mr. Ben Barka but ignored his companion at the time, a Moroccan student, who gave the alarm.

Mr. Ben Barka was taken to Boucheseiche's house where, according to the gangster, Georges Figon, he was turned over to the Moroccan Minister of Interior, Gen. Mohammed Oufkir.

It has been well established that several middle-ranking French officials knew of the plot. But the Oufkir group and the Boucheseiche gang were permitted to fly to Morocco.

The two detectives and Lopez remained free for two weeks after they had confessed. Lawyers have hinted that it was hoped they, too, would flee.

The Government's defense, reiterated in depositions by Premier Georges Pompidou and Interior Minister Roger Frey, is that it had no evidence calling for arrests and that it was trying to save Mr. Ben Barka through a direct approach to the Moroccan Government.